ANIMATION STUDIO Kit

Stop-Motion Animation Workshop

LESSON 4

STORYBOARDING AND STORYTELLING

Hamilton Buhl

Introduction

This guide outlines the important stage of "planning" for your final stop-motion animation video. You will be introduced to the process of storyboarding and storytelling, and view examples of other students' work. You will then be introduced to the process of creating a collaborative storyboard.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of storyboarding and storytelling in relation to your stop-motion animation project;
- Use various media and technology to convey messages and meaning;
- Work interactively, co-operatively and collaboratively to plan and create a storyboard;
- Use the technique of brainstorming to identify a topic for your group animation production;
- Engage in critical reflective thinking as part of the decision-making and problem-solving process;
- Invent and incorporate unique visual symbols and movement to create personal meaning in art;
- Appreciate the diversity of individuals, as reflected in their artwork.

Storyboarding Your Idea – Telling a Story

Great animation starts with a great "idea" for a story. Telling stories is an age-old method used to communicate ideas and recreate and preserve culture, memories and traditions. By learning how to tell a story through animation, you will be challenged to use symbols and movement to effectively convey your messages and stories. The intent is to tell a meaningful story that expresses a strong message to its intended audience.

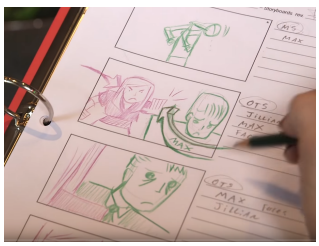
STORYBOARDING AND STORYTELLING

Individual Learning Activity: Storytelling and Inspiration

Frédéric Back, author of the acclaimed, Oscar-winning animated film *The Man Who Planted Trees*, is an inspirational figure. His work is an expression of his dedication to a message of peace and respect for the Earth and its communities. Back has created several outstanding animated films that can inspire your students to tell their own meaningful stories. The web pages below explore how his passion for the environment led Back to make animated films in the hope of making this world a better place. fredericback.com/ateliers/index3.en.shtml. (See themes 6 and 7).

All animation productions (and many live-action productions) begin life as a *storyboard*, which is a script of sorts written with images as well as words, similar to a giant comic strip. Storyboarding includes *scene planning*, which requires you to plan out the scenes of your movie from start to finish before you begin animating. Your storyboards will incorporate the key poses in the story; *in-betweens* can be incorporated later. Your group will need to figure out the acting and timing requirements for each scene. Please ensure that your group devises a distinct beginning, middle and end to your story. Remember, the better you plan, the better your animated video will be!

To learn about storyboarding, watch the follow-ing video:



Storyboarding Your Idea (4 min 30 s)

Click here for Storyboard Sheets and a Completed Storyboard example.

Introduction to Teamwork and Brainstorming

You will create your movies in collaborative teams. Your teacher will assign you to a Production Team of four to six people for the conceiving, planning and production stages of the studio portion of the stop-motion animation lessons.

All teams are expected to work in a respectful and collaborative fashion. Each team member should participate equally and share tasks. As each team member will bring their own unique expertise and talents to the group, everyone's ideas and contributions to the project are to be considered valuable. If you work together effectively, are committed to the project and use your group's diversity of skills, your team's final product will likely be much better than if you had completed the project on your own!

The Stop-Motion Animation Rubric see Annex 01 provides guidelines for your team and identifies how each section of the production process will be graded. The high percentage allocation for the teamwork component of this rubric reflects the view that strong teamwork skills are deemed essential to working successfully in the competitive real world of animated film production.

Group Learning Activity: Brainstorming a Topic

Your first task as a team is to effectively brainstorm ideas to help in the selection of a good topic for your animated video. Please identify relevant themes from the following list of subjects.

- English
- Science
- Health
- Technology
- Math
- Social Studies
- Arts (Art, Music, Theatre)
- Media Literacy (for advanced curriculums—grades 7 and up)

Some popular and relevant themes identified for your age group include:

- Bullying
- Substance Abuse
- Racism, Diversity & Body Image
- The Environment
- Active Healthy Lifestyles

You may choose a topic from the above themes, or think up one of your own. The Thought Bubble below may help you brainstorm. Once your team identifies a theme, you may want to research it on the Internet to help you come up with a specific idea for your animation. The idea that you select should be interesting and meaningful to all team members.

Note: Please take your time when devising your topic and story for your animated video, as this initial decision will affect all other steps of the production process!

"endangered species" "ocean" "marine life" "life" "death" "pregnancy" "birth" "teen pregnancy" "marriage" "friendship" "family" "war" "peace" "gravity" "electricity" "pulleys & levers" "tsunamis" "earthquakes" "equilibrium" "microscopes" "bacteria" "nuclear energy" "mutations" "sickness" "disease" "cures" "AIDS" "magic" "legends" "fantasy" "fables" "myths" "witches" "fairies" "leprechauns" "metamorphosis" "ecosystems" "lightning" "icebergs" "polar bears" "traditions" "whales" "hunting" "fishing" "trapping" "sports" "murmuring" "sealing" "special occasions" "peer pressure" "discoveries" "famous events" "outer space" "wonders of the world" "planets" "stars" "black holes" "mountains" "forests" "waterfalls" "music" "occupations" "poverty"

I am brainstorming

Creating a Collaborative Storyboard

Once your team has come up with a potential topic for your animation, you will need to have your idea approved by your teacher. Once given the go-ahead, your group will need to begin storyboarding.

Learning Activity: Cartoon Animation

Watch the following video to see how a film is made and to get an idea of the enormous time commitment involved.

The Making Of-The Nightmare Before Christmas
(2007, 23 min 43 s)

youtu.be/kLw-Fo8uhis

Synopsis: The entire team behind The Nightmare Before Christmas walks though the process of developing, creating and shooting this classic. (Recommended for grades 7 and up.)

Storyboard Websites

To see examples of the intricacy of storyboards made by professional artists, please visit the following websites:

Stephen McCallum's Animation/Media Production

stephenmccallum.blogspot.com/2009/07/storyboards.html
(Storyboard for *From Flores*, 1991)

Michael Sporn Animation, Inc.

michaelspornanimation.com/splog/?p=1536

(Storyboards from the Disney classics *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*)

Monsters University: Animated Storyboard
(2016, 1 min 50 s)

youtu.be/VAXQIHrFj38

Learning Activity: Creating Your Storyboard

You may use a copy of our Storyboard Sheet to help plan out your storyboard, use storybook templates found on the Internet or create your own storyboards from scratch. Keep your story and message simple and concise, as it takes 24 frames to make up one second of animation. The process will likely take longer than you might think.

Note: The average animated movie length will vary and depend upon topic selection and length of class time. Your teacher will help each class group determine an appropriate run time.

Use this Storyboard Rubric to ensure that your team includes all information and components when designing and completing your storyboard.

Questions you might want to consider include:

- What is your setting?
- How many characters do you need in the shot?
- Do you need any important props in the shot?
- What type of shot (close-up, wide shot, establishing shot, etc.) do you need?
- What is the shot's angle (i.e., how/where is the camera positioned)?
- Do you need any special lighting? The lighting depends on what type of mood you're trying to convey (for example, you may need candlelight, moonlight, a dark alley or a bright sunny day).
- Will you use any special effects?

STOP-MOTION ANIMATION RUBRIC

ANNEX 01

REMEMBER, ALL GREAT STORIES START WITH A GREAT IDEA. GREAT STORIES MAKE GREAT ANIMATION.

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	MARK %
IDEA FOR STORY	The idea for the story was excellent. Message extremely clear.	The idea for the story was very good. Message very clear.	The idea for the story was good. Message fairly clear.	The idea for the story needs work. Message is unclear.	15%
STORY-BOARD	Extremely well planned—excellent flow. Drawings extremely effective in conveying the actions and emotions of story.	Well planned—very good flow. Drawings very effective in conveying actions and emotions of story.	Fairly well planned—good flow. Drawings fairly effective in conveying actions and emotions of story.	More planning required—flow needs work. Actions and emotions of story not clearly conveyed in drawings.	15%
CHARACTERS	Characters are extremely interesting—excellent effort. Characters are extremely suitable to storyline.	Characters are very interesting—very good effort. Characters are very suitable to storyline.	Characters are interesting—good effort. Characters are suitable to storyline.	Characters are vague—more effort required. Characters' suitability to storyline is unclear.	10%
SET/ PROPS	The set/props do an excellent job of enhancing the production's aesthetics and mood.	The set/props do a very good job of enhancing the production's aesthetics and mood.	The set/props do a fair job of enhancing the production's aesthetics and mood.	The set/props need effort to help enhance the production's aesthetics and mood.	5%
DESIGN	Students display excellent knowledge of design elements.	Students display very good knowledge of design elements.	Students display fairly good knowledge of design elements.	Students' knowledge of design elements lacking.	10%
MOVIE PRODUCTION	Movement in the movie is very smooth. An excellent attempt to incorporate "principles of animation" and/or "tricks" into movie.	Movement in the movie is smooth. A very good attempt to incorporate "principles of animation" and/or "tricks" into movie.	Movement in the movie is generally smooth. A good attempt to incorporate "principles of animation" and/or "tricks" into movie.	Movement in the movie is irregular/jumpy. The incorporation of the "principles of animation" and/or "tricks" is not apparent.	15%
CREATIVITY	Extremely creative work.	Work is very creative.	Work is creative.	More thought and creative effort required.	10%
TEAMWORK	The team worked extremely well together—shared tasks and activities.	The team worked very well together—shared tasks and activities.	The team worked well together—shared most tasks and activities.	The team had difficulties working together and sharing tasks and activities.	20%
				TOTAL	/100

STORYBOARD SHEET

TITLE:

ANIMATION TEAM:

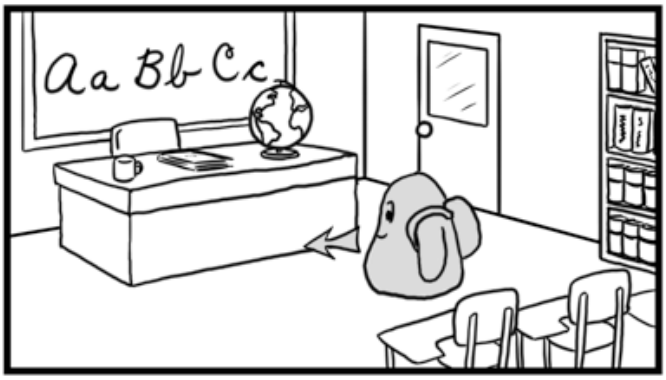
BEGINNING	DESCRIPTION

MIDDLE	DESCRIPTION

END	DESCRIPTION

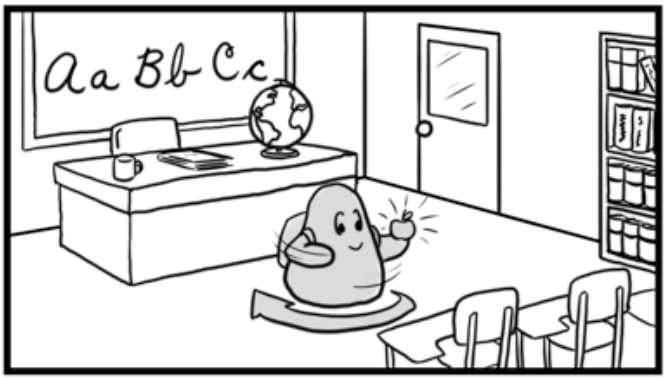
STORYBOARD EXAMPLE

storyboard



action

Character walks to middle of frame.



action

Character spins quickly, apple appears in left hand during spin.

action

Character places apple on teacher's desk, exits to left of frame.

STORYBOARD RUBRIC

ALL STORYBOARDS START WITH A GOOD IDEA FOR A STORY.

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEEDS WORK	MARK %
SCENE SELECTION	All main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.	Most main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.	Some main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.	The main focus of the story is on "non essential events"; some scenes are incomplete.	/4
CAPTIONS	Captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.	Most captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.	Some captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.	Captions don't clearly identify each scene or help connect the storyline.	/4
CHARACTERS	All main characters are identified; their actions and emotions match the storyline extremely well.	All main characters are identified; their actions and emotions match the storyline very well.	All main characters are identified, but their actions and emotions don't always match the storyline.	The main characters are not well identified; their actions and emotions are unclear in relation to the storyline.	/4
SET AND PROPS	The set/props relate extremely well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.	The set/props relate very well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.	Some of the set/props relate fairly well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.	There is difficulty relating the set/props to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.	/4
THINKING SKILLS	All ideas are generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is quite original and creative. The message is very clear.	Most ideas are generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is very original and creative. The message is clear.	Some ideas aren't generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is fairly original and creative. The message is somewhat clear.	Most ideas are not generated and organized in a logical sequence. The originality and creativity of the plot is lacking. The message is unclear.	/4
				TOTAL	/20